

from all parts of the Nation and all walks of life, no effort has been made to bring the Juvenile Justice legislation back before the House. In fact, these measures have remained bottled up with delay tactics and parliamentary maneuvering. Now, as less than 20 days remain in the scheduled legislative session, the need for leadership and action on this issue is greater than ever.

Stemming the tide of gun violence is an issue of deep importance to us and to our Nation. Now is the time for our leaders in Washington to roll up their sleeves, not sit on their hands. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to use your influence as the highest ranking Member of the House of Representatives to bring immediately these legislative proposals back before the Congress so that they can be sent to the President for his signature.

"Respectfully," and it is signed by 66 family members from central New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, I include the letter for the RECORD:

August 26, 2000.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House,
U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: As concerned citizens of the State of New Jersey, we are writing to request your immediate assistance in having Congress consider gun safety legislation before it adjourns for the year.

As you know, in June of 1999, following the tragic murders at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, Congress considered a package of Juvenile Justice proposals. When this legislation was considered in the Senate, an amendment by Senator Frank Lautenberg was attached that would close the dangerous gun show loophole, ban the importation of high-capacity ammunition magazines and mandate the use of child safety locks on firearms.

These three proposals, which have also been introduced in the House of Representatives, are mainstream, common sense measures that polls show are supported by a large, bipartisan majority of the public. While we in New Jersey don't have gun shows, other states do. That undermines our gun safety laws because they allow criminals to buy dangerous firearms without background checks, waiting periods or identification at these shows. A law mandating child safety locks, if enacted, could save the lives of hundreds of young Americans.

Many of us visited Washington D.C. as part of the "Million Mom March" this Spring. In the many weeks since that watershed event, attended by thousands of Americans from all parts of the nation and all walks of life, no effort has been made to bring the Juvenile Justice legislation back before Congress. In fact, these measures have remained bottled up with delay tactics and parliamentary maneuvering. Now, as less than twenty days remain in the scheduled legislative session, the need for leadership and action on this issue is greater than ever.

Stemming the tide of gun violence is an issue of deep importance to us, and to our nation. Now is the time for our leaders in Washington to roll up their sleeves, not sit on their hands. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to use your influence as the highest-ranking member of the House of Representatives to immediately bring these legislative proposals back before Congress, so that they can be sent to the President for his signature.

Respectfully,

Signed by 66 New Jersey citizens.

Mr. Speaker, every school I visit, every PTA meeting that I attend, every classroom that I teach in, kids, moms and dads, in fact nearly everyone I talk with in New Jersey, tells me it is high time that Congress take action to keep guns out of the hands of kids and criminals.

Mr. Speaker, the time has come for Republicans, Democrats, and Independents to join together to pass these common sense gun safety measures.

RACIAL PROFILING AND POLICE BRUTALITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, there is an issue of great potency brewing in the African American community such that I feel compelled to bring it to the attention of this body.

Like other Americans, African Americans are animated by the same issues. Education is at the top of the list. And of course, there is a Patients' Bill of Rights and preserving Social Security and Medicare.

But what amazes me from the data and, anecdotally, when looking at black publications in my own district, is a surprising issue that has greater interest and intensity than others; and that issue is racial profiling and police brutality.

This is most interesting because the African American community has embraced police because there was such high crime, especially in the early 1990's. Crime is down 10 percent now from last year, 34 percent over the last few years; and yet there is this intense hostility based on what is happening particularly to black men but also to black women.

If one has raised a boy the way that I have so that he gets to go to college, graduates in 4 years, has a good job, it does not make a dime's worth of difference if he is driving down a road and there is a sense that who he ought to pull over are black people rather than others.

So that, if we look at Interstate 95, where 17 percent of the drivers are African-Americans, 56 percent of those searched are black; or let us look at California in a 1997 study that showed that only 2 percent of 3,400 drivers stopped yielded contraband; or a recent study of racial profiling on I-95 here in the East, about 17 percent of those who drive along I-95 are African Americans but they represented 60 percent of the drivers searched in 1999.

Something is wrong with those figures. And it has now penetrated deep in the African American community and it knows no class bounds. The richest and most middle-class African Americans know that there is no difference

to a police officer who is looking for black people between a youngster that has done all he should do and somebody who may, in fact, be carrying drugs.

What amounts to a loss in the criminal justice system has occurred throughout the African American community where so many young African American men are caught up in the first place. We need to have that community where we had it when they began to embrace police in the 1980s, and we are losing them.

This body apparently had some recognition because under the present majority, H.R. 1443, which was a bill sponsored by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) was indeed passed in 1998, which allows the collection of certain kinds of information about traffic stops. This body passed it. It was sent to the Senate. The Senate Committee on the Judiciary never acted on it.

We need to pass this bill again. It is now called H.R. 118. We need to pass it. Because about the worst thing that can happen in our society is that people believe that criminal justice does not have justice. And it is very hard for me to believe that there is justice in the system when the disparities are as huge as this.

□ 1700

Obviously, most African Americans play by the rules. So when you do not know whether playing by the rules will get you pulled over or not, particularly if you are a young black man, the stereotypic person to pull over, the rage of a loss of confidence that you are operating in a fair system becomes very great.

This is an issue for us all. This is an issue we can eliminate simply by first studying it and coming to understand what its causes are. H.R. 118 does not ask this body to take specific steps now. We need to know what is happening and why it is happening. If, in fact, black Americans see that we do not care enough even to find out why these disparities exist, I think we are sending a horrific message, especially now as people get ready to go to the polls. They want to see whether or not something can be done. I am not asking that something be done during this session. I do believe that during this session we have to start the ball rolling so that we can know what, if anything, we can do about these very telling statistics.

A TRADITIONAL EDUCATION IS THE BEST EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHERWOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak briefly on two or three important topics or issues in education. First, we have done a more